Seeing how we see each other: Learning from quantitative research

among young people in the UK

Tania ap Siôn

University of Warwick, Coventry, UK

Author note:
Dr Tania ap Siôn
St Mary's Centre
Llys Onnen
Abergwyngregyn
Gwynedd
Wales LL33 0LD, United Kingdom
e-mail: t.ap-sion@warwick.ac.uk
website: www.st-marys-centre.org

Abstract

The quantitative strand of the Young People's Attitudes towards Religious Diversity Project, conducted by the Warwick Religions and Education Research Unit, set out to capture data from over 2,000 students living in each of the four nations of the United Kingdom (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales) and from London as a special case. ~~While participation was voluntary, all students attending participating schools were invited to take part.~~ Anonymity and confidentiality were assured. In total, nearly 12,000 students submitted thoroughly completed questionnaires. The project concentrated on schools within the state-maintained sector, but sought to obtain roughly equal numbers of students within each of the five areas attending schools with a religious character and without a religious foundation. The aim of the present paper is to collate, present and assess the findings from this survey that are relevant to the theme of this Special Issue, concerned with examining how a religion shapes the way of seeing the world and seeing other religious traditions. Highlights from the research include: students who are themselves religiously motivated hold more positive attitudes towards religious diversity; there is no evidence that schools with a religious character produce students who are less accepting of people from other religious faiths; religious education does work in the sense of leading to attitudes that promote community cohesion, lessen religious conflict, and promote the common good.

Keywords: Religious diversity, community cohesion, religious education, faith schools

Introduction

The Young People's Attitude towards Religious Diversity Project, designed and conducted ~~by researchers~~ within the Warwick Religions and Education Research Unit ~~based at the University of Warwick~~, was a three year funded project within the AHRC/ESRC Religion and Society Programme running from 2009-2012. Underpinning the project was the understanding that, as society and communities in the UK and Europe become increasingly diverse (and complex) in terms of religious composition, there is a corresponding need for rigorous academic research to explore attitudes towards 'the other'. Employing a mixed-methods approach and set within a UK context, the Young People's Attitude towards Religious Diversity Project was established to gain more detailed knowledge and understanding of young people's attitudes towards religious diversity, and to gain more detailed knowledge and understanding of the factors that influence the formation of these attitudes.

~~The quantitative strand of the project drew on three foundational sources of theory, which informed the survey design: the preceding qualitative strand of the Young People's Attitude towards Religious Diversity Project; the psychology of religion; and empirical theology. The qualitative research study, with its richness and depth of data, was used to identify what matters to young people and the ways in which they express themselves. In the psychology of religion, the individual differences tradition documented by Argyle (1958), Argyle and Beit-Hallahmi (1975) and Hood, Hill and Spilka (2009) takes seriously the influencing factors of individual differences relating to sex and personality for understanding beliefs, practices, attitudes and values. Sex and personality measures were, therefore, important inclusions in the survey, with the Junior Eysenck Personality Revised instrument~~

measuring personality (extraversion, neuroticism, psychoticism). Self-esteem and empathy measures were also included. In empirical theology, researchers such as Streib (2007), Francis and Ziebertz (2011) and Anthony and Ziebertz (2012) take seriously the influencing factors of theological issues (as distinct from the psychological and sociological) for understanding beliefs, practices, attitudes and values. For this reason, the survey operationalised theological constructs, including measures for God images and theologies of religion.

In addition, the quantitative strand of the project built on two further research traditions also developed by researchers in the Warwick Religions and Education Research Unit: the Teenage Religion and Values Project (Francis 2001) concerned with mapping the relationships between religion and social and personal values and attitudes; and the Outgroup Prejudice Project concerned with measuring attitudes towards outgroups. The Young People's Attitudes towards Religious Diversity survey included measures for four dimensions of religion from the Teenage Religion and Values Project (self-assigned affiliation, attendance at a public religious place of worship, personal religious practice, and religious belief) and a range of proximity measures developed from the Outgroup Prejudice Project.

As well as using and developing already established measures, the Young People's Attitude towards Religious Diversity survey was concerned with creating and testing new scales to measure attitudes to religious diversity, with three scales emerging: the Attitude towards Religious Diversity Index (ARDI), the Scale of Attitude towards Religious Diversity (SARD), and the Scale of Attitude towards Freedom of Religious Clothing and Symbols in School (SAFORCS).

The survey sample drew on 13- to 15-year-old students attending state-maintained secondary schools in the four nations of the UK (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales) and London (recognised as having a distinctive multi-faith and multi-ethnic

character), with roughly half from schools with a religious (Christian) foundation and half from schools with no religious foundation. To enable the generation of a wide range of research questions and for analyses to have statistical significance, the aim was to survey over 2,000 students from each of the five locations. Almost 12,000 students participated. The survey size and construct also enabled both simple (descriptive cross-tabulation) and more complex (multivariate) analyses to be conducted. The research group is fully aware of the strengths and limitations of approaches to working with quantitative data, and has decided to employ the approaches independently in different papers in order to maximise the usefulness of the data. The research group also focused on specific subsets of the data as appropriate to illuminate specific research questions, selecting data according to country, type of school and sex of students. These features make the quantitative strand of the Young People's Attitudes towards Religious Diversity Project, the most ambitious survey of its kind to be conducted in the UK.

The purpose of the current study is to collate, present and assess the findings of quantitative strand of the Young People's Attitudes towards Religious Diversity Project as relevant to the theme of this Special Issue concerned with how a religion shapes the way of seeing the world and seeing other religious traditions.

Project findings

To date, fourteen published studies have emerged from the quantitative strand of the Young People's Attitudes towards Religious Diversity Project. In this overview these fourteen papers have been organised around six themes to illustrate the nature and significance of the research findings. The six themes are styled as: Examples of specific questions focused on nations (London, Wales, Northern Ireland, England and Scotland); Studies focusing on religious and non-religious identities (atheists, Christians); Studies focusing on the social and public significance of religion (pluralism, religious clothing);

Studies focusing on the effect of religious schools (England and Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland); Studies focusing on the effect of religious education; Studies rooted in empirical theology. With each presentation of theme and illustrative publication, consideration is given to study contexts, research questions, samples, analyses, and results, which are relevant for discerning their contribution to the exploration and understanding of the influences on young people's attitudes towards religious diversity in the UK.

Theme 1: Examples of specific questions focused on nations

The first theme takes as its focus relevant issues and debates for each of the five nations in the UK included in the study (London, Wales, Northern Ireland, England and Scotland), with a view to testing how the quantitative survey illuminates these debates.

London

In the London study, 'The personal and social significance of diverse religious affiliation in multi-faith London', Francis and Penny (2016) explored what it means to have young people of different religions living together in London, a location distinctively marked by its religious diversity. This study was contextualized within the debate concerned with self-assigned religious affiliation (Fane, 1999) and its usefulness for predicting significant variance on matters of public significance as well as personal significance.

From a sample of 2,296 male and female students (1,250 Christian, 231 Hindu, 227 Muslim, 505 no affiliation, and 102 Buddhists, Sikhs and Jews), two research questions were addressed in the study. First, does self-assigned religious affiliation serve as a predictor of significant differences in the personal worldview and experience of young people? Second, does self-assigned religious affiliation serve as a predictor of significant differences in the social worldview of young people?

Using cross tabulation, the results showed that, when Christian, Hindu and Muslim students were compared with non-affiliated students, self-assigned religious affiliation was an

indicator for predicting key aspects of personal and social identity. For example, the religiously unaffiliated were more likely to see religious people as intolerant and religion as bringing more conflict than peace than the religiously affiliated, and the religiously unaffiliated were also less likely to support the rights of students to wear distinctive religious clothing or symbols in school. In addition, while the religiously affiliated were keener than the unaffiliated to promote religious social tolerance, some religious groups remained keen to keep social boundaries in place in their own lives, such as Muslim students who were less likely than other groups to be happy about close relatives marrying someone from a different religious background.

Wales

In the Wales study, 'Schools with a religious character and community cohesion in Wales', Francis, Penny, and ap Siôn (2016) explored whether the presence of church schools has a detrimental effect on community cohesion in Wales. This study was contextualised within the political concern in the community cohesion agenda by the Welsh Government (Welsh Assembly Government, 2009, 2011; Bashir, Parr, Platts-Fowler, & Robinson, 2012; Welsh Government, 2014) and the debate that began in the 1980s about whether schools with a religious character are able to prepare students for life in a religiously and ethnically diverse society (Dummett & McNeal, 1981; The Swann Report, 1985; Jackson, 2003; Berkeley, 2008).

From a sample of 2,328 male and female students (1,087 from schools with a Christian religious foundation and 1,241 from schools without a religious foundation), the research question asked whether students educated in schools with a religious foundation in Wales hold attitudes that are more or less conducive to life in a religiously diverse society than students educated in schools without a religious foundation.

Using cross tabulation, the results showed that, although there were differences in the worldviews of the two kinds of school, the schools with a religious foundation in Wales were neither more adequately nor less adequately preparing students for life in a religiously diverse society in comparison with other schools. This finding offers a critique to arguments that claim that schools with a religious foundation are having a negative effect on community cohesion. More specifically, the significant differences in emphasis placed on *the religious worldview* of the two types of school (perhaps as a consequence of the admission's policies of schools with a religious foundation), included students in schools with a religious foundation being more likely: to see religion as a matter of importance; to be supported by religious conversation at home; to have religion influencing their outlook on life; to have a higher level of religious belief; and to give a higher level of commitment to support the place of religion in the life of the school. Students attending schools with a religious foundation were also more like to be conscious of the factors that have shaped their views on religion (mother, father, friends, and religion in school) and spend more time learning about Christianity, Islam and Judaism than Buddhism, Hinduism and Sikhism. The lack of significant differences between the two groups of students in relation to *attitudes towards religion and religious diversity* included areas such as living with religious plurality, accepting religious plurality, attitudes towards religion, and accepting religious clothing in school.

Northern Ireland

In the Northern Ireland study, 'Testing the 'worlds apart' thesis: Catholic and Protestant schools in Northern Ireland', Francis, Penny, and Barnes (2016) explored the differences between the religious worldviews found among students attending 'Protestant' schools and students attending 'Catholic' schools in Northern Ireland. This study was contextualized within the well-known divide between Protestant and Catholic identities in

Northern Ireland and the account given by Murray (1982, 1983, 1985), identifying two dominant cultures present in schools in Northern Ireland, which he described as being 'worlds apart'. From a sample of 888 male students drawn from 'Catholic' schools and 'Protestant' schools, this study's research question asked whether young people living in Northern Ireland today remain 'worlds apart'.

Using cross tabulation, the results demonstrated important differences between the two groups of students in four areas that still support the 'worlds apart' thesis of Murray. First, Catholic school students and Protestant school students viewed themselves in a significantly different way from the way in which they perceived the other (with Protestants having a more positive image of themselves than the image of Protestants held by Catholics, and with Catholics having a more positive image of themselves than the image of Catholics held by Protestants). Second, school played a more important part in shaping the views of Catholic school students about both Catholics and Protestants than was the case for Protestant school students. Third, Catholic school students felt that their schools had a greater influence, compared with Protestant school students, on shaping their views not only on Christianity, but also on the other Abrahamic religions, Islam and Judaism. Fourth, Catholic school students were significantly more positive than Protestant school students in accepting outward signs of religious clothing in schools, including not only the Christian cross but also the Hindu bindu, the Jewish kippah, the Muslim burka, and the Sikh turban.

England

In the England study, 'Does RE work and contribute to the common good in England?', Francis, Penny, and McKenna (2016) explored whether taking Religious Education as an examination subject contributes to the 'common good' as reflected in students' personal and social values. This study was contextualized within research concerned with examining student responses to religious education in England, from the

1960s onwards, including Conroy's research (Conroy, Lundie, Davis, Baumfield, Barnes,

Gallagher, Lowden, Bourque, & Wenell, 2013) which asked the question, 'Does RE work?'

and concluded that the subject was not working effectively in the areas investigated. The aim

of this study was to approach the question, 'Does RE work?' from a different angle through

looking at the impact of taking RE as an examination subject on shaping students'

worldviews.

From a sample of 528 male students (from schools without a religious foundation;

those taking examination RE and those not taking examination RE), three specific research

questions were articulated. First, do students taking RE as an examination subject differ in

their religiosity from other students? Second, do students taking RE as an examination

subject differ in their evaluation of RE when compared to other students? Third, do students

taking RE as an examination subject differ in their attitude towards religious diversity when

compared to other students?

Using univariate analysis, the results showed that RE was 'working' in a number of

ways as an examination subject. More specifically, taking RE as an examination subject had

an identifiable impact on the worldview of students. As no difference was found in the

'religious worldview' of students taking RE as an examination subject from other students

(that is, religious beliefs, religious affect, and religious environment), other factors would

have influenced differences emerging between the two groups. Students taking RE as an

examination subject differed in their experiences of religious education in schools when

compared with other students. The former attributed more influence to school in shaping their

views about religion generally and about the six faith traditions specifically, and about

helping them to understand people from different religious backgrounds and racial

backgrounds. Students taking RE as an examination subject also differed in their attitudes

towards living with religious diversity when compared with other students, showing greater

respect for religious diversity, greater acceptance of religious diversity and greater

acceptance of religious distinctiveness. Therefore, there is some evidence to indicate that RE

promotes religious understanding to build an inclusive society and to promote community

cohesion, and that RE works to build a society in which religious and cultural diversity is

better understood, embraced and welcomed.

Scotland

In the Scotland study, 'Growing up in Scotland: not one Catholic community but

three', Francis, Penny, and Neil (2016) explored the identity of the Catholic community in

Scotland as reflected within the nation's distinctive provision for Catholic schools. This study

was contextualized within the discussion about Catholic identities in Scotland and the thesis

that the Catholic community comprises three overlapping communities with different

worldviews rather than one homogeneous community (Francis, 1986, 2002; Egan & Francis,

1986; Francis & Gibson, 2001). The three distinctive Catholic communities are identified as

'lapsed', 'sliding' and 'practising', according to self-assigned religious affiliation as

'Catholic' and differentiation according to three levels of religious practice (never attends

church is 'lapsed'; attends church less than weekly is 'sliding'; and attends church weekly is

'practising').

From a sample of 985 female students (from schools with a Catholic religious

foundation and from schools without a religious foundation, including the categories of

religiously unaffiliated and Catholics – lapsed, sliding, practising), two research questions

were posed in this study. First, do 'lapsed' Catholic students differ in significant ways in their

attitudes and values from non-affiliated students? Second, do 'sliding' Catholic students

differ in significant ways in their attitudes and values from 'lapsed' Catholic students?

Using cross tabulation, the results showed the continuing relevance of the thesis that

the Catholic community in Scotland should not be perceived as one homogenous community

(with a common set of values and beliefs), but as three overlapping communities, all of which are differentiated from the religiously unaffiliated, but in varying degrees. Looking at the findings more closely, it was found that the worldview of 'practising' Catholics included a background where parents and grandparents took religion seriously and mothers in particular encouraged conversations about religion. Religion was seen to shape these students' lives and they had a real sense of purpose in life; they kept their faith in God and believed in heaven and hell; they supported the connections between religion and education and welcomed an approach to RE that gave opportunity for learning about different religions; they had an inclusive approach to respecting all religions and to promoting equality in society; they accepted religious plurality and welcomed close personal relations across religious boundaries; they saw benefits of living with cultural diversity; they accepted and supported the rights of all groups to wear distinctive religious clothing in school. When the 'practising' Catholics were compared with the 'sliding' Catholics and the 'lapsed' Catholics, there were significant decreases respectively in many of these domains, but there were also important differences between the worldview of 'lapsed' Catholics and the worldview of the religiously unaffiliated, indicating that self-assigned religious affiliation without practice has a meaningful influence on personal and social values and beliefs, although a more nuanced understanding is gained by including practice.

Theme 2: Studies focusing on religious and non-religious identities

The second theme examines in greater depth the consequence of religious and non-religious identities, and the influences that these may have on personal and social attitudes and values. This theme is illustrated by two studies, one focusing on atheist identity and one on Christian identity.

Atheists

In the study, 'Young atheists' attitudes towards religious diversity: A study among 13- to 15-year old males in the UK', Francis, Penny, and Pyke (2013) compared attitudes towards religious diversity among young atheists (those who did not believe in God) and young theists (those who believed in God). This study builds on an early Francis and Kay (1995) study of young atheists, which argued that religious belief is a predictor of individual differences in personal and social attitudes. Nine research questions were generated to explore the individual difference of attitudes towards religious diversity among 5,518 young males from the five nations (England, Wales, Northern Ireland, Scotland and London), comprising atheists and theists in schools with a Christian religious foundation and schools without a religious foundation. The research questions were presented in the following way. Compared with young theists, how do young atheists: perceive factors that have influenced their views about religion; rate their interest in finding out about religious diversity; embrace religious diversity in their social networks; see religion as having a negative influence in the world; see religion as having a positive influence in the world; feel about religious diversity in terms of social proximity; feel about the place of religion in society; evaluate the impact of religious and cultural diversity on their environment; and permit religious symbols and clothing in public spaces?

Using univariate analysis, the findings indicated that there were significant differences between the attitudes of young atheists and young theists in all of these areas, with the exception of one. In each of the nine research question areas, more positive responses were received from young theists when compared with young atheists, with the exception of the item concerned with seeing religion as a negative influence, where results were similar for both groups (including, for both groups, a higher percentage who viewed Islam as a negative influence when compared to other religions). This raises questions about the implications for community cohesion and the importance of religious education in

societies where religious diversity is becoming more visible, atheism is increasing, and church influences are declining. Based on these findings, is there potential for less tolerance of religious diversity if the current trends prevail?

Christians

In the study, 'Christian affiliation, Christian practice, and attitudes to religious diversity: A quantitative analysis among 13- to 15-year-old female students in the UK', Francis, Pyke, and Penny (2015) explored whether young people who call themselves Christian but who do not practise are different from young people who profess to have no religion. Drawing on a sample of 5,749 female students from England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, comprising churchgoing Christians, nominal (non-churchgoing) Christians, and non-affiliated students, two specific research questions were posed asking whether nominal Christians differ in their attitudes towards religious diversity when compared with non-affiliated students and whether church attendance leads to less tolerance of other religious groups.

Using univariate analysis, the findings indicated that there were differences between the nominal Christians and the unaffiliated students, with the nominal Christians holding more positive attitudes towards religious diversity, which was particularly evident in their level of interest in religion, indicating that the category of 'nominal' does carry significance. In relation to churchgoing (practising) Christians, it was found that they were more tolerant of other religious groups (when compared to the nominal and the unaffiliated), illustrated by having the most respect for the right to wear religious dress in schools and showing more interest in other religious groups. The three groups (practising, nominal and unaffiliated) shared, however, an appreciation of the importance of religious education in schools for shaping their views on religion and religious diversity when compared to influences of mother, father, television, and Internet.

Theme 3: Studies focusing on the social and public significance of religion

The third theme is concerned with the connections between religion and matters of social and public significance. This theme is illustrated by two studies, one focusing on the broad issue of pluralism and one on the specific issue of religious clothing.

Pluralism

In the study, 'Is belief in God a matter of public concern in contemporary Wales? An empirical enquiry concerning religious diversity among 13- to 15-year-old males', Francis, ap Siôn, and Penny (2014) explored whether belief in God is related to a range of attitudes and values among young people. This study was contextualized in the debate about the predictive power of indicators of religiosity (such as self-assigned religious affiliation, religious practice, and religious belief), with this particular study focusing on religious belief.

From a sample of 1,124 male students in Wales (from schools with a Christian religious foundation and schools without a religious foundation, divided into young theists and young atheists by response to the question, 'I believe in God'), three research questions were posed. First, in contemporary Wales, how does the worldview of young people who believe in God differ from the worldview of those who do not believe in God? Second, does personal belief in God help young people to make sense of life in a religiously diverse society? Third, does belief in God intensify suspicions and competition between different religious groups?

Using univariate analysis, the results demonstrated significant differences between the worldviews of young theists and the worldviews of young atheists, with the young theists displaying a more positive view of pluralism in contemporary Wales, including both cultural diversity and religious diversity. Therefore, evidence indicates that belief in God may promote community cohesion, making belief in God a matter of public concern. In addition, only 22% of the young males surveyed in Wales believed in God, which raises additional

questions about future community cohesion in a society where atheism is on the increase, church going is on the decrease, and religious diversity continues to grow.

Religious clothing

In the study, 'Freedom of religion and freedom of religious clothing and symbols in school: Exploring the impact of church schools in a religiously diverse society', Francis, Village, McKenna and Penny (in press) explored the effect of schools with a Christian religious foundation on attitudes towards the physical outward signs of religious diversity. This study was contextualised within the wider debate concerned with the European Human Rights agenda, the high profile legal cases arising from the wearing of religious clothing and symbols, and the place of schools with religious foundations in multi-faith societies.

From a sample of 2,385 male and female students from England, Wales and London (from schools with a Christian religious foundation and schools without a religious foundation, including self-assigned Christians and those professing no religion), three research areas were examined. First, the internal consistency reliability of the Scale of Attitude towards Freedom of Religious Clothing and Symbols in School (SAFORCS) among students attending schools with a religious character and schools without a religious foundation was tested. Second, the connections between attitude towards freedom to wear religious clothing and symbols in school and personal factors (age, sex), psychological factors (personality), religious factors (affiliation, attendance, Bible reading frequency, prayer frequency) and school factors (contrasting schools with and without a religious foundation) were explored. Third, the effects of schools with a religious character on attitude towards freedom to wear religious clothing and symbols in school, after taking into account individual differences in personal factors, psychological factors, and religious factors as well as students being nested within schools and within three geographical locations were investigated.

Using reliability analysis, correlational analysis and multilevel linear analysis, findings showed a high internal consistency for the Scale of Attitude towards Freedom of Religious Clothing and Symbols in School (SAFORCS) with an alpha co-efficient of .92, and after controlling for individual differences in personality and religiosity, students attending schools with a Christian religious foundation held neither a more positive nor a less positive attitude towards freedom to wear religious clothing and symbols in school (according to the various religious traditions) compared to students attending schools without a religious foundation. Such a finding challenges arguments that maintain that schools with a religious foundation are less well equipped to prepare their students for life in a religiously diverse society when compared to other schools, which is a matter of social and public significance.

Theme 4: Studies focusing on the effect of schools with a religious foundation

The fourth theme investigates in greater depth the effect of schools with a religious foundation on attitudes towards religious diversity. This theme was illustrated by three studies conducted in England and Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland. The history of schools with a religious foundation has evolved differently within these three constituencies and has been shaped by three different legislative frameworks. Only in very recent years has educational legislation developed in Wales independently from England.

England and Wales

In the study, 'Church schools preparing adolescents for living in a religiously diverse society: An empirical enquiry in England and Wales', Francis and Village (2014) again entered the debate concerned with the potential divisiveness of schools with a religious foundation and whether they prepare students less well for life in a religiously diverse society, drawing particularly on the report from the Runnymede Trust, *Right to Divide?* (Berkeley, 2008).

From a sample of 5,402 male and female students from England, Wales and London (from schools with a Christian religious foundation and schools without a religious foundation, who were Christian or professed to have no religion), the research question set out to test the 'divisiveness' theory in schools with a Christian religious foundation using the Attitude towards Religious Diversity Index (ARDI).

Using ~~correlational analysis to explore connections between attitude towards religious diversity and personal factors (age, sex, personality) and religious factors (self-assigned religious affiliation, religious attendance, Bible reading and prayer frequency) and~~ multilevel linear analysis to explore effect of school type on attitude towards religious diversity, after taking account of individual differences in personal factors and religious factors (and that students were nested in schools), results indicated that students attending schools with a Christian religious foundation held neither a more positive nor a less positive attitude towards religious diversity when compared to students attending schools without a religious foundation. A closer examination of the results from the correlational analysis showed that a more positive attitude towards religious diversity was associated with being female, higher neuroticism scores, higher lie scale scores, lower extraversion scores and lower psychoticism scores as well as with self-assigned religious affiliation and higher levels of religious attendance, Bible reading and prayer frequency. In schools with a Christian religious foundation, students were more likely to self-identify as Christian and to score more highly on the other religious variables. The multilevel linear analysis, however, confirmed that this individual religiosity was more important than a school's religious status in shaping attitudes towards diversity. This study is significant because it provides additional evidence that counters an argument that schools with a religious foundation prepare their students less well for life in a religiously diverse society when compared to other schools.

The subsequent papers explored the same research question in Scotland (Francis, Village, Penny & Neil, 2015) and in Northern Ireland (Francis & Village, 2015).

Scotland

In the study, 'Catholic schools and attitudes towards religious diversity: An empirical enquiry among 13- to 15-year-old students in Scotland', Francis, Village, Penny, and Neil (2015) also employed the Attitude towards Religious Diversity Index (ARDI) to test the 'divisiveness' theory among schools with a Catholic religious foundation in Scotland, drawing on a sample of 2,530 male and female students (from schools with a Catholic religious foundation and schools without a religious foundation, who were Christian or professed no religion).

Using the same analytic approach as the previous study, results again challenged the theory that schools with a religious foundation prepare their students less well for life in a religiously diverse society when compared to schools without a religious foundation. In this study, however, there was some evidence to support a 'school effect'; for example, the correlational analyses showed that attitude towards religious diversity had a positive connection with attendance at a Catholic school, and the multilevel linear analyses showed (after taking into account individual differences relating to personal, psychological, and religious factors) some variance in student attitudes that related to attending a Catholic school.

Northern Ireland

In the study, 'Assessing outgroup prejudice among 13- to 15-year-old students attending Catholic and Protestant secondary schools in Northern Ireland: An empirical enquiry', Francis and Village (2015) examined the notion of the 'divisiveness' of schools with a religious foundation in the distinctive context of Northern Ireland. This study was located within the debate about the impact of the divided school system in Northern Ireland

and the qualitative research of Hughes (2011), examining social identity and inter-group attitudes among students attending a 'Protestant' secondary school, which concluded that the majority of its students articulated a Protestant, British identity which was held in opposition to a Catholic Irish identity.

From a sample of 1,799 male and female students (from 'Catholic' schools and 'Protestant' schools, who were Christian or professed no religion), the research question was designed to test Hughes' (2011) thesis by exploring student attitudes in 'Protestant' schools and 'Catholic' schools in Northern Ireland, using the Outgroup Prejudice Scale. The notion of prejudice used in this study was drawn from the Outgroup Prejudice Project, as described by Village (2011). Specifically, the study was concerned with assessing: levels of outgroup prejudice in general and in relation to denominational identity; the extent to which individual differences in levels of outgroup prejudice are associated with personal factors (age and sex), psychological factors (extraversion, neuroticism, and psychoticism) and religious factors (affiliation, church attendance, and personal prayer); and the effect of being a student in Catholic or Protestant schools in terms of levels of outgroup prejudice.

Using bivariate analyses and hierarchical modelling, results highlighted three main findings. First, although not particularly high, levels of outgroup prejudice were present in these groups; for example, around one third of both Catholic and non-Catholic students were not interested in finding out more about the other's religion, which may indicate a lack of concern for building bridges between the groups. Second, outgroup prejudice was significantly higher among males and decreased slightly with age as well as being associated with higher psychoticism scores and lower neuroticism scores. Religious factors, however, were associated with lower levels of outgroup prejudice. Third, although levels of outgroup prejudice varied from one school to another (both in the case of Protestant schools and Catholic schools), being in a minority religious group in a school lowered prejudice against

the majority, which may indicate that mixing students and increasing outgroup contact lowers prejudice. In addition, higher levels of prejudice were evident in schools with higher numbers of religious pupils, for example, in schools with a substantial majority of Catholic students. This study builds on and deepens the findings of the qualitative research of Hughes (2011) within the distinctive Northern Irish school context.

Theme 5: Studies focusing on the effect of religious education

The fifth theme is concerned with examining the effect that school religious education as a curriculum subject has on students in relation to their attitudes towards religious diversity.

In the study, 'Does Religious Education as an examination subject work to promote community cohesion? An empirical enquiry among 14- 15-year-old adolescents in England and Wales', Francis, ap Siôn, McKenna, and Penny (in press) argued that one way of testing the effect of religious education as a curriculum subject on attitudes relevant to community cohesion (in a context where statutory religious education for all students in state-maintained schools is required) would be to compare the attitudes of those studying religious education at public examination level with the rest. This is another study contextualized within the Conroy debate (Conroy, Lundie, Davis, Baumfield, Barnes, Gallagher, Lowden, Bourque, & Wenell, 2013) concerned with the question about whether RE 'works'.

From a sample of 3,052 male and female students from England and Wales (those who were taking religious education as an examination subject and those who were not), using the Scale of Attitude towards Religious Diversity (SARD), the research question asked whether religious education as an examination subject worked to promote community cohesion.

Using regression analysis to take account of the known influencing factors of personal, psychological, religious and contextual variables before testing for the effect of

religious education as an examination subject, results showed that there was a small but statistically significant positive association between taking religious education as an examination subject and higher scores on the SARD (Scale of Attitude towards Religious Diversity), indicating that in this area RE could be described as 'working'.

Theme 6: Studies rooted in empirical theology

The sixth theme is concerned with understanding more fully the complexity of relationships occurring within the Attitude towards Religious Diversity Index (ARDI) and the place of theological factors within this. Previous studies have demonstrated that measures relating to the social scientific study of religion are able to predict attitudes towards religious diversity, but what about measures designed to test for theological influences?

In the study, 'Christian identities, theologies of religion, and attitude towards religious diversity: A study among 13- to 15-year olds across the UK', Francis, Penny, and Astley (in press) explored the significance of empirical theology to attitudes towards religious diversity operationalised through the Astley-Francis Theology of Religions Index.

From a sample of 10,734 male and female students from England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and London (who were Christian or professed no religion), the research question asked, 'Do the insights offered by empirical theology explain additional variance in the Attitude towards Religious Diversity Index (ARDI) after the variables proposed by the social scientific study of religion are taken into account?'

Using regression analysis, three results emerged. First, within the social scientific study of religion the seven aspects relating to individual difference measured (affiliation, attendance, personal prayer, reading scriptures, participation in religious groups, religious beliefs and religious attitudes) each had a positive correlation with attitude towards religious diversity, with belief in God being the strongest predictor. Second, within empirical theology the six distinctive theological positions or attitudes concerning truth claims in religion

measured found that two were associated with more positive attitudes towards religious diversity (pluralism and interreligious perspective), three with less positive attitudes towards religious diversity (atheism, agnosticism and exclusivism), and one that was unrelated to attitudes towards religious diversity (inclusivism). Third, regression analysis demonstrated that these theological variables also accounted for additional variance in attitudes towards religious diversity, highlighting the importance of also taking into account how young people view the truth claims of their religion when trying to understand the factors which influence their attitudes towards religious diversity.

Conclusion

The aim of the present paper was to draw together and assess the contribution to the theme of this Special Issue (concerned with examining how a religion shapes the way of seeing the world and seeing other religious traditions) of the published quantitative findings from the Young People's Attitude towards Religious Diversity Project conducted by the Warwick Religions and Education Research Unit at the University of Warwick. ~~This large-scale survey involved almost 12,000 13- to 15-year-old students from state-maintained schools in the 'five' nations of the UK (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and London).~~

The significance of the quantitative strand of this project lies both in methodological approach and in contribution to key issues or debates that benefit from being informed by an understanding of relevant attitudes of young people living in the religiously and ethnically diverse society of the UK. From a methodological perspective, the survey has intentionally focused on attitudinal dimensions, bringing fresh insights from the psychology of religion and empirical theology, as well as building on already existing and tested empirical research traditions among young people concerned with attitudes, with religion, and with outgroup

prejudice. ~~In addition, three new scales designed to measure attitudes towards religious~~

From a content perspective, the methodological approach has meant that the findings from the project are able to contribute, in diverse and nuanced ways, to a number of key issues or debates. Of note are the project's contributions to four particular issues or debates, relating to school, personal religiosity, RE, and national context. First, a significant group of findings raise questions about the nature and role of schools with a religious foundation within a religiously diverse society by challenging both findings from other studies and popular assumptions and by illustrating the complexity required to respond to the questions posed. There was no evidence that schools with a religious foundation were preparing their students either better or less well for life in a religiously diverse society. Second, many of the studies explored the relationship between personal religiosity and personal and social values pertinent to attitudes towards religious diversity. These findings support the position that worldviews associated with both 'religion' and 'non-religion' are of real social and public significance; for example, students who were themselves religiously motivated held more positive attitudes towards religious diversity than those who were not religiously motivated. Third, there is evidence to demonstrate a relationship between studying religious education at GCSE examination level and attitudes that are more open and positive to life in a religiously diverse society. Fourth, a major strength of the project lies both in the scale and in the specificity of the studies conducted, which recognise the importance of identifying contextualising factors in the individual nations that should determine the nature of the investigation and the debate. This appreciates essential differences in national contexts and creates a more nuanced understanding of and contribution to the issues most relevant to a particular nation.

The importance of exploring and understanding the factors that help shape young people's attitudes towards religious diversity is as relevant to other countries, both in Europe

and further afield, as it is to the nations of the UK. Currently, the Young People's Attitude towards Religious Diversity survey is being replicated in the Republic of Ireland and Australia, and such replications provide a tested empirical instrument sufficiently complex to help illuminate particular national issues and debates as well as providing sources of valuable comparative data. As this paper has illustrated through collating and presenting the UK project's published findings, the significance and impact of the Young People's Attitude towards Religious Diversity Project extends beyond the Academy to relevant governments, policy-makers, stakeholders, practitioners, and young people themselves.

Like so many sponsored projects, the constraints of a three-year project limited the number of participants to fewer than 12,000 students distributed across five locations (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales and London), and restricted the number of outputs that could achieved from the project.

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